

STATEMENT OF
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT, INVESTIGATIONS, AND OVERSIGHT
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Good morning, Chairman Carney, Ranking Member Rogers and Members of the Subcommittee. I am Wayne Parent, Deputy Director of the Office of Operations Coordination and Planning at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I am pleased to appear today alongside Christine Wormuth and the other distinguished witnesses. Thank you for inviting me to discuss how the Office of Operations Coordination and Planning (OPS) conducts strategic-level planning with the Incident Management Planning Team (IMPT) and how this planning effort facilitates the Secretary of DHS' (Secretary) ability to execute his Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5) incident management responsibilities.

To put this discussion in its proper context, it is critical that we first recognize some of the authorities that guide OPS' actions on these important issues. Pursuant to the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (HSA), the Secretary leads DHS in executing its key missions: preventing terrorist attacks; reducing the country's vulnerability to terrorism; minimizing the damage and assisting in recovery from terrorist attacks that do occur in the U.S.; and acting as a focal point regarding natural and manmade crises and emergency planning. The Secretary's role as defined in the HSA is further refined in HSPD-5.

Under HSPD-5, the Secretary is the principal Federal official for domestic incident management, responsible for "coordinating Federal operations within the United States to prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies." On this point, it is especially important to recognize the fact that the term "incident" applies equally to real or potential threats and not just "disasters" that have already occurred, as is often erroneously suggested. To carry out those responsibilities, the President directed all "Federal departments and agencies to cooperate with the Secretary in the Secretary's domestic incident management role." Thus, the Secretary is authorized by the President to coordinate Federal operations across the full spectrum of homeland security operations, i.e., prevention, protection, response, and recovery.

In order to enable the Department to more effectively conduct joint homeland security operations across all organizational elements, the Secretary created OPS pursuant to Section 872 of the HSA. The mission of OPS is to integrate departmental and strategic-level interagency planning and operations coordination in order to prevent, protect, respond to and recover from terrorist threats/attacks or threats from other man-made or natural disasters.

Incident Management Planning Team (IMPT)

Planning is critical to the Secretary's effective execution of HSPD-5 authorities. This is especially true for two reasons: we face a variety of ever evolving all-hazards threats (i.e., terrorist, man-made, and natural disaster); and a multitude of distinct authorities and directives currently exist to govern the actions of the interagency for any one of the potential threats. In this regard, the Secretary's responsibility, per HSPD-5, to coordinate the actions of the interagency requires that he possess knowledge of the respective responsibilities and capabilities of the interagency before an incident occurs. As a result, the IMPT was created in 2006 to provide a strategic-level planning capability that did not previously exist within DHS or the interagency.

The mission of the IMPT is to provide contingency and crisis-action incident management planning in support of Secretary's national level domestic incident management responsibilities articulated in the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and HSPD-5. It is comprised of two components: (1) a core group of 15 full-time planning representatives from key DHS elements (e.g., TSA, CBP, I&A, FEMA, Coast Guard) as well as other key interagency members (i.e., DOD, the FBI, HHS, DOT, DOE, EPA and the American Red Cross); and (2) a pre-identified "on-call" staff of 38 planners comprised of other members from DHS as well as the interagency. The IMPT was established in September 2006 and since then was developed into an effective interagency body through frequent training and exercising.

The IMPT's initial actions have been focused on the development of strategic level interagency plans that address each of the 15 National Planning Scenarios previously developed by the White House.¹ The all-threats and all-hazards scenarios include nuclear, chemical, biological, natural disaster and cyber incidents. Each plan developed by the IMPT identifies the specific actions, per existing authorities, that individual departments and agencies intend to take in the event a given scenario occurs. None of the plans developed by the IMPT alter any existing authorities of individual Federal Departments and Agencies or convey new authorities upon the DHS Secretary or any other Federal official. The primary value of this effort is to identify the strategic-level responsibilities of the entire interagency in one comprehensive document. This planning process also serves two additional purposes: it facilitates the ability of Secretary to fulfill his/her coordination responsibilities under HSPD-5 by providing awareness of the individual capabilities that a specific agency plans to deliver; and it also identifies seams and gaps that exist within the interagency planning efforts for a particular scenario.

The IMPT's initial success has been due in large measure to its development and use of the National Planning and Execution System (NPES) planning process. Early on, it was recognized that the success or failure of the IMPT would hinge largely on its ability to develop a planning process that could coordinate the efforts of this interagency group and facilitate the development of a shared planning culture across the federal government.

¹ For the purpose of expediting the prioritization and planning process, an HSC Deputies Committee determined that the 15 National Planning Scenarios would be collapsed into eight scenario sets.

No planning system or process previously existed. When the IMPT was established, few federal departments and agencies adhered to a formal planning process that organized the operations planning efforts within their respective departments. To achieve this goal, members of OPS created NPES, a planning process that integrated current and emerging interagency planning “best practices” that was consistent with the NRP (now NRF); adhered to the core concepts and terminology addressed in NIMS; and provided for plan validation by incorporation into various national level exercises (e.g., Ardent Sentry and TOPOFF 4).

This process was converted to a curriculum that was taught to each member of the IMPT. The feedback from this training has been overwhelmingly positive and has resulted in numerous requests by departments and agencies that this training be offered to others within their respective departments and agencies. To date, more than 500 planners from across the interagency have been trained and more sessions are planned. In addition, many state, local, and even foreign governments have requested copies of the NPES and related training.

In order to build on the initial success of the IMPT and NPES, on December 4th 2007, the President approved *Annex 1, National Planning, Homeland Security Presidential Directive-8* (HSPD-8). Annex 1 will further enhance the preparedness of the United States by formally establishing a standard and comprehensive approach to operations planning. This annex was intended to provide guidance for conducting planning in accordance with the Homeland Security Management System identified in the National Strategy for Homeland Security of 2007. When fully adopted, Annex 1 will build upon the strategic-level planning effort already well under way by the IMPT, by calling for the development of operational and tactical level operations plans for each of the 15 National Planning Scenarios, at the federal Department/Agency level.

DHS Crisis Action Process

When an incident occurs or threat becomes known that triggers the Secretary’s HSPD-5 responsibilities, my Office facilitates the DHS Secretary’s ability to execute these responsibilities through its management of the DHS Crisis Action Process. The DHS Crisis Action Process is a process by which DHS leadership manages a domestic incident by following a general sequence of events while simultaneously engaging in a continuous cycle of actions. The DHS Crisis Action Process is designed to integrate the following functions: leverage the input and collective experience of DHS and other senior federal leaders; sustain strategic-level crisis action planning; collect, develop, and disseminate strategic-level situational awareness products; and facilitate the Secretary’s ability to conduct informed dialogue for coordination with his interagency peers. The primary entities which perform functions central to the Crisis Action Process are the DHS Senior Leadership Group (SLG) and the DHS Crisis Action Team (CAT).

Senior Leadership Group (SLG):

Once the DHS National Operations Center (NOC) is notified of a credible threat or that an incident has occurred, the NOC gathers information, generates required notifications, and provides situational awareness to the Secretary. The Secretary or the Director of

OPS may convene the Senior Leadership Group (SLG) in order to provide initial incident orientation, discuss the incident, resolve intra-department issues, and provide initial guidance and course of action recommendations. The SLG is comprised of the various DHS Assistant Secretaries that report to the Secretary and other select leaders within DHS. The SLG can be convened by the Secretary at any time and its primary purpose is to facilitate the Secretary's ability to receive input and recommendations from his most experienced leaders during times of crisis. When convened during times of crisis, the Secretary can also issue initial guidance to the SLG members regarding actions he deems appropriate. The Secretary will also consult with appropriate cabinet peers during an incident.

Crisis Action Team:

The Secretary's Crisis Action Team (CAT) is a scalable incident management entity formed during an event or identified threat to conduct Strategic-level operations coordination and planning to support the Secretary in his fulfilling his HSA and HSPD-5 responsibilities. Specifically, the CAT was developed to facilitate the Secretary's ability to execute responsibilities as the principal Federal official for domestic incident management. It is important to note that the CAT membership includes interagency representatives as well as DHS components.

The CAT is a scalable entity organized into three branches: Operations, Planning, and Support. The Incident Management Officers (IMOs), who constitute the core group of the CAT Operations Branch, are always activated and serve in the National Operations Center Watch. Their primary function of the Operations Branch of the CAT is to provide the Secretary with integrated interagency reporting and situational awareness products regarding the specific event which triggered the CAT activation. The Planning Branch of the CAT is comprised of members of the IMPT and conduct strategic-level crisis action planning. Both the operations and planning branches of the CAT are also expected to provide any and all products necessary to facilitate the Secretary's ability to conduct informed dialogue with his interagency peers.

Conclusion

I am very pleased to report on the progress DHS has made in how we plan for and manage incidents at the strategic level. DHS has made several key advancements in operational matters that directly support the Secretary's ability to carry out his Homeland Security Act, HSPD-5 and HSPD-8 responsibilities. On May 22, the Secretary acknowledged a culminating point for many of these improvements by directing several enhancements to OPS and renaming it from the Office of Operations Coordination to the Office of Operations Coordination and Planning. We have begun to implement some of these enhancements, which will allow us to better integrate the strategic planning and operations functions we already perform.

Since Hurricane Katrina, the National Operations Center has thoroughly reviewed and revamped its procedures for managing information to ensure a high level of situational awareness for senior officials for all hazards events. These improvements have been

successfully validated through real events over the last two years, and extensively tested during the TOP OFFICIALS 4 exercise in 2007 and National Level Exercise 2-08 in May, 2008. The Pet Food Contamination incident in May, 2007; the California Wildfires in October, 2007; and the recent Annapolis Conference and New Year's Eve mass gatherings are just a few examples of major events that were effectively coordinated using an improved system for managing information and supporting senior decision makers. During these events, the NOC and DHS Crisis Action Team managed information flow, developed Situation Reports and Executive Summaries, convened subject matter experts, developed critical information requirements, and prepared briefing materials for the Secretary. These materials were used by Departmental leadership and the White House in their processes for determining courses of action.

OPS has satisfied every Homeland Security Council Katrina Lessons Learned recommendation that is applicable to the NOC. Key among these was the establishment of the NOC and a national reporting chain, as well as the implementation of the Common Operating Picture (COP) to enhance interagency situational awareness. For example, national reporting requirements and a national reporting chain were developed to cover hurricanes and tropical storms. These national reporting requirements and information flow were completed in advance of the 2006 hurricane season and remain in use now.

My office has also assumed responsibility for supporting the Secretary's Principal Federal Officials. In preparation for the 2008 hurricane season, Secretary Chertoff has pre-designated teams of Principal Federal Officials (PFOs) and Federal Coordinating Officers (FCOs). To provide the necessary skills and experience for these important positions, the Secretary named officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Transportation Security Administration, and the United States Coast Guard to lead each team. A number of the pre-designated officials already served on the PFO teams during the last two hurricane seasons.

As you know, the PFO and FCO have distinct responsibilities, but work in tandem as part of the Unified Coordination Group within the Joint Field Office to determine the requirements and set unified objectives and priorities in partnership with the affected State(s). The PFO is the Secretary's representative in the field and assists him in executing his HSPD-5 domestic incident management responsibilities.

I hope that this testimony leaves you with an appreciation for the progress DHS has made to improve strategic planning and operations coordination. Thank you for the opportunity to report to the Subcommittee on this progress. I request that you place this testimony in the permanent record and would be pleased to answer any questions at this time.